

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 ARA-10 EA-10 ACDA-12 SSM-03
/135 W

-----005787 230111Z /63

R 212338Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0497
INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
USMISSION USUN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 13150

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, UNSC, IS, LE
SUBJ: GENDARMES FOR UNIFIL

REF: STATE 98231

BEGIN SUMMARY: WE THINK THE FRENCH MIGHT SUPPORT THE
IDEA OF GENDARME UNITS BEING ATTACHED TO UNIFIL. WE
DO NOT REPEAT NOT BELIEVE THAT THE GOF WOULD BE PRE-
PARED TO CONTRIBUTE DIRECTLY TO SUCH A FORCE. END
SUMMARY.

1. WITHOUT DISCUSSING THE MATTER WITH FRENCH OFFI-
CIALS, OUR JUDGMENT IS THAT THE GOF WOULD SUPPORT THE
IDEA OF POLICE UNITS BEING ATTACHED TO UNIFIL TO WORK
IN CONJUNCTION WITH LEBANESE GENDARMES. AS REFTTEL
POINTS OUT, IT WOULD SERVE THE OBJECTIVE (WHICH THE
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GOF SHARES) OF ENHANCING LEBANESE AUTHORITY IN THE
SOUTH. IT MIGHT ALSO SERVE TO RELIEVE THE UNIFIL
MILITARY UNITS OF CERTAIN POLICE FUNCTIONS FOR WHICH
THEY ARE NOT TRAINED. THE MEMBERS OF THE FRENCH UNIFIL
CONTINGENT, FOR INSTANCE, ARE HIGHLY TRAINED COMBAT
SOLDIERS KEPT IN RESERVE ESPECIALLY FOR OVERSEAS
INTERVENTION. WE UNDERSTAND THEY ARE HAVING TO LEARN

THE PEACEKEEPING ROLE ON THE JOB.

2. AT THE SAME TIME, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE FRENCH WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONTRIBUTE PERSONNEL TO SUCH A POLICE FORCE. THE GOF CONSIDERS THAT THE PERCENTAGE OF FRENCH PERSONNEL IN UNIFIL IS ALREADY TOO HIGH IN RELATION TO THE PROJECTED TOTAL FORCE OF FOUR THOUSAND. THE FRENCH ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE EFFECT OF THEIR PARTICIPATION IN UNIFIL ON FRENCH RELATIONS WITH ALL THE ARAB STATES, INCLUDING THOSE WHICH ARE THE MOST ARDENT SUPPORTERS OF THE PALESTINE CAUSE. THE SLOWNESS OF THE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL IS HEIGHTENING THIS POLITICAL CONCERN. EVEN THOUGH THE NUMBER OF GENDARMES THAT ANY COUNTRY WOULD BE EXPECTED TO CONTRIBUTE MIGHT BE SMALL, THE GENDARMES WOULD BE HIGHLY VISIBLE AS THE NATURE OF THEIR TASK WOULD PUT THEM INTO CLOSE CONTACT WITH LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE GOF IS PREPARED TO ACCEPT THIS ADDITIONAL EXPOSURE, THOUGH WE CAN'T BE SURE UNTIL WE ASK.

3. THOUGH THE GOF MIGHT NOT BE WILLING TO CONTRIBUTE TO A UN POLICE FORCE, IT MIGHT STILL BE HELPFUL IN GETTING ONE GOING. THE GOF HAS PROVIDED TRAINING TO A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES AND WOULD PROBABLY BE A GOOD SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON, FOR INSTANCE, WHAT COUNTRIES

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HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO PROVIDE UNITS. WE THINK IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA TO EXPLORE THE CONCEPT WITH THE FRENCH AT AN EARLY OCCASION. IN THE MEANTIME, IN DISCUSSIONS WITH UN OFFICIALS AND OTHERS IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE NOT TO TALK AS IF FRENCH PARTICIPATION COULD BE OBTAINED. THEY MIGHT NOT BE PLEASED IF IT GOT BACK TO THEM THAT WE WERE TALKING WITH OTHERS ABOUT THE DISPOSITION OF FRENCH PERSONNEL.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TROOP DEPLOYMENT, POLICIES, INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING FORCES, TROOP CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PARIS13150
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780173-0148
Format: TEL
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780431/aaaaaznm.tel
Line Count: 103
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c811efa9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 98231
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2891598
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GENDARMES FOR UNIFIL
TAGS: MOPS, IS, LE, FR, UNSC, UNIFIL
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c811efa9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014